Missing soldiers of 1971 Indo-Pak war in Pak jails

†1723. SHRl SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that large number of soldiers went missing during 1971 Indo-Pak war and evidences regarding their existence in Pakistan jails are surfacing; if so, the total number of such soldiers;

(b) whether it is a fact that the said soldiers are forced to live a hellish life in Pakistan;

(c) the efforts being made by Government for their release; and

(d) the assistance provided by Government to their dependents along with the scheme formulated for their future rehabilitation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY). (a) to (d) About 54 missing defence personnel of 1971 War are believed to be in the custody of Pakistan. Pakistan has however been consistently denying the presence of any such personnel in its custody. The Government has been pursuing this issue with Pakistan for a long time.

This issue was taken up with the Pakistan Government at various levels on a number of occasions. Recently, during the visit of External Affairs Minister to Islamabad in January, 2001, the matter was again raised with President of Pakistan and the latter in turn agreed to a visit by a small group of relatives of missing personnel to Pakistan.

Accordingly, a delegation of 14 relatives of missing defence personnel visited 10 Jails in different cities of Pakistan from 1st June, 2007 to 14th June, 2007, but they could not find any missing defence personnel of 1971 War.

As per laid instructions, a missing person is presumed to be killed if he is not found for 7 years and thereafter his family is given liberalized pensionary awards, which include liberalized family pension, gratuity and education allowance for children. Actions accordingly have been taken in case of missing defence persormel of 1971 War. The Government will continue to pursue the issue of missing defence personnel with the Government of Pakistan as it has been doing in the past.

Joint Naval exercise by India, US, Japan, Australia and Singapore

1724. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:
SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA:
MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a joint Naval exercise has been planned by India, US, Japan, Australia and Singapore in the Bay of Bengal in September, 2007; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.